

The first step in unravelling the mystery of the undated letter is to divide it into two parts. Paragraphs 1,3,4,5,10, 11, and to a lesser extent 6,7, and 8, offer information as to the date on which the letter was written. Paragraphs 2,6,9,10, and 11 offer information as to the nature of the adventure in which Oswald expected to engage, and which occasioned the writing of the letter.

DATING THE LETTER

Paragraph 1. "This is the key to the mailbox which is located in the main post office in the city on Ervay Street. This is the same street where the drugstore, in which you always waited is located. You will find the mailbox in the post office which is located 4 blocks from the drugstore on that street. I paid for the box last month so don't worry about it."

The last sentence of the paragraph limits the possible dates of the letter to three: November, 1962, January, 1963 when the Oswalds lived at 604 Elisbeth Street in Dallas, and April, 1963, when they lived at 214 West Neely Street in Dallas. Oswald paid for post office box #2915 at the Dallas main post office on October 9, 1963 (Holmes H7,295). He paid rent on the box in December, 1962, and in March, 1963 (WR661).

(Post office boxes #6225 which Oswald purchased at the Dallas Terminal Annex post office on November 1, 1963, and #30061 which he purchased in June, 1963, in New Orleans are eliminated by Oswald's reference in the first sentence to "the main post office on Ervay Street".)

The first, second and third sentences of this paragraph denote a time when Marina Oswald did not have a key to Oswald's mailbox, did not know in which post office it was, and did not even know the location of the main post office in Dallas. By January, 1963, Marina by her own testimony was using the post office box for her personal mail. She testified that she sent a letter to a boyfriend in Russia and that the letter was returned to Oswald's post office box for insufficient postage since, unknown to her, postal rates had gone up one cent. Postal rates on first class mail raised one cent in early January 1963.

Marina offers the further information that when Oswald found this returned letter in the post office box he brought it home and read it to her and was very angry. We must assume that since Marina used the post office box as a return address she had some hope of retrieving a possible answer from the Russian boyfriend without Oswald's knowledge, that in fact she had a key to the box and might have gone to it during the day when Oswald was at work.

A further suggestion that the dates of April and January 1963 may be eliminated as possible dates for this letter is that the main post office in a city is one of the first landmarks noted by a stranger. By April 1963 Marina had lived in Dallas for five months. She had lived there for two months by January 1963. She was therefore no stranger to the city and should have known where the main post office was.

Paragraph 1 of this letter almost certainly eliminates April, 1963, as a possible date; and it makes a date of January, 1963, doubtful.

Paragraph 3. "I paid the house rent on the 2nd so don't worry about it."

This sentence could fit any of the three possible dates since Oswald paid the rent on the Elisbeth Street apartment for the first time on November 3, 1962 (10H237), which would cause it to fall due on January 2nd or 3rd, 1963. Rent was due on the Neely Street apartment on either April 3 or 2nd and Oswald paid it on one of those two dates. (WR172).

Thus, though the Commission pretends (WR 172) that this sentence indicates a date of April, 1963, it really throws it wide open; either of the other dates are possible too.

Paragraph #4. "Recently I also paid for water and gas."

This sentence eliminates a date of April, 1963, according to evidence in the Commission's own files. Oswald never paid a gas bill on the Neely Street apartment.

FBI agents Will Hayden Griffin and James C. Kennedy signed a report dated December 5, 1963, in which they state that they have been advised by the Lone Star Gas Company that gas service was turned on at 214 West Neely on receipt of a request made by Lee H. Oswald. The agents further state:

"On this date service was connected, March 4, 1963, a letter was addressed to Lee H. Oswald, 214 West Neely Street, requesting a deposit of \$10.00. This \$10.00 deposit was received by the Lone Star Gas Company on March 6, 1963, and credited under deposit No. B91453.

"No payments were ever made by Oswald following his posting of this \$10.00 deposit." (CR 1133, 22H112)

Oswald did pay a water bill of \$2.97 on about April 4, 1963. (Same reference.) However, Marina Oswald testified that they did not pay a water bill at the Elisbeth Street apartment which, if true, would also eliminate the dates of November, 1962, and January, 1963. (1H8) It might be well to keep in mind that Marina may have been encouraged to volunteer this information in order to prevent an identification of the undated letter with the Elisbeth Street apartment and a time prior to the Walker incident.

Paragraph 5. "The money from work will possibly be coming. The money will be sent to our post office box. Go to the bank and cash the check."

The word "possibly" suggests doubt, a time when Oswald had quit or been fired from a job and was in doubt as to whether he would receive his final pay. Oswald was allegedly fired from his job at Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall on April 6, 1963 and his final check from the firm was issued on April 10 and paid on April 12. Oswald, however, could have been in no doubt that he would receive his pay for work that he

It is impossible, however, to assign this paragraph to the other two possible dates. On neither of them was Oswald out of work or in doubt about receiving his pay. According to the records of Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, he was regularly employed and regularly received his pay. (22H, 278-290).

(This paragraph actually points to a fourth date for the letter. I will discuss that point later.)

Paragraphs 6,7,8.

"6. You can either throw out or give my clothing, etc., away. So not keep these. However, I prefer that you hold on to my personal papers (military,civil,etc.).

"7. Certain of my documents are in the small blue valise.

"8. The address book can be found on my table in the study should need same."

These three paragraphs strongly indicate that Oswald was not at the apartment in question when he wrote this letter, that he was in fact not seated at his "table in the study". Had he been, he would most likely have put the address book with the key and the letter. And he would probably also have sorted out the military and civil papers from the small blue valise and left them for Marina.

Taken together these three paragraphs indicate a date when Oswald and Marina were separated, when Marina was at the apartment in question and ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ Oswald was elsewhere. They suggest that the letter was in fact mailed to her. This speculation is strengthened by the fact that Oswald nowhere in the letter mentions the number of the post office box, suggesting that he had put it on the envelope as a return address.

There is, however, no evidence that Oswald and Marina were separated in January or April 1963. They were separated in November 1962, separated in fact off and on from ~~to~~ October 9, 1962 to about Nov. 17, 1962.

These paragraphs seem to eliminate all three dates: April 1963, January 1963 and November 1962: I will suggest a fourth possible date, at a later point.

Paragraph 10. "I left you as much money as I could, \$60 on the second of the month. You and the baby can live for another two months using \$10.00 per week."

The first sentence of this paragraph lends itself to no other interpretation than that Oswald and Marina were separated at the time it was written. Paraphrased, it means quite simply, "When I saw you last on the second of the month, I left you \$60.00."

In so far as can be ascertained from the evidence the Oswalds were not separated in January or early April 1963. The only one of the three possible dates to which this paragraph could be assigned is November 1962, or an alternate fourth date which will be suggested later.

Paragraph 11. "If I am alive and taken prisoner, the city jail is located at the end of the bridge through which we always passed on going to the city (right in the beginning of the city after crossing the bridge)."

Since it is the county jail rather than the city jail which is located at the end of the bridge or viaduct leading to downtown Dallas, this paragraph suggests a time when Oswald himself was unfamiliar with Dallas. In January 1963 Oswald had lived and worked in Dallas almost three months. By April 1963 he had lived and worked there for more than five months.

November 1962, or earlier, is the most probable date for this paragraph.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

Paragraphs 1 and 11 suggest a time when both Oswald and Marina were unfamiliar with Dallas. This indicates Nov. 1962. Paragraph #4 eliminates April 1963. Paragraphs 6,7,8, and 10 specify a time when the Oswald's were separated. They are not known to have been separated in January or early April 1963. They are known to have been separated in November 1962, and earlier.

November 1962 would seem far and away the most likely date for this letter of the three possible dates. But there is enough doubt cast on the November date by internal evidence of the letter to make me suggest a fourth date, which I will do later.

#### DETERMINING THE ADVENTURE

##### Paragraphs 2,9,6,10, and 11.

"2. Send the information as to what has happened to me to the Embassy and include newspaper clippings (should there be anything about me in the newspapers). I believe the Embassy will quickly come to your assistance on learning everything.

"9. We have friends here. The Red Cross also will help you.

"6. You can either throw out or give my clothing, etc., away. Do not keep these..."

"10. ...You and the baby can live for another two months using \$10.00 per week.

"11. If I am alive and taken prisoner..."

Paragraph 2 notes that the adventure if it comes off will be newsworthy. The Russian Embassy would jump "quickly" to Marina's aid. Thus we may assume that the adventure will have an international flavor not displeasing to the Russians.

Paragraph 9 in its reference to the Red Cross also connotes an adventure with an international aspect, since it would almost certainly be the

International Red Cross which Oswald refers his Russian wife to.

Paragraphs 6 and 10 suggest that Oswald plans to be gone for some time. He will not need his clothes and he envisions that friends, the Embassy, the Red Cross will have to come to the aid of his wife and child when her money runs out. While Oswald suggests in the last paragraph that he may be killed or jailed, he does not expect to be jailed since in that case he would need his clothes.

Paragraph 11. This offers an alternative, death or imprisonment in the event the adventure fails. The adventure is therefore both illegal and dangerous.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

The adventure described would seem to be some sort of spectacular defection. Marina testified that it was in New Orleans that Oswald concocted a scheme to hijack an airplane. He may have had a similar scheme in Dallas. Or Marina, since she displaced this undated letter forward to the date of the Walker incident may have also displaced the New Orleans hijack scheme forward in time from November 1962. I would suspect some activity in regard to the fall missile crisis.

#### A FOURTH POSSIBLE DATE FOR THE LETTER October, 1962.

In spite of the fact that Oswald's statement that he paid the box rent "last month" would seem to eliminate October 1962 as a date for the letter, the rest of the letter suggests this date so strongly that I want to present the evidence on it. (On the chance that Oswald, not entirely at home in the Russian language may have inadvertently written "last month" when he meant "last week" or some other time.)

Paragraph 1 and 11 suggest a period when Oswald and Marina were unfamiliar with Dallas and Marina so unfamiliar with the city that she did not even know where the main post office was located. It suggests a time before Marina started using the post office box. Since Oswald purchased the box on October 9, we might assume that this letter was written right after that time and that Marina then started using it and the key which was sent her with the letter. We know from the episode of the letter to the Russian boyfriend that she was using the box in January 1963.

Oswald worked at Leslie Welding Co. in Fort Worth through Monday October 8, 1962. He did not show up for work the next day and instead suddenly appeared in Dallas where he rented post office box #2915. It is uncertain where Oswald lived during all of this time. He was registered at the YMCA from the 15th to the 19th. Some of this time was spent at the Gary Taylors at 3519 Fairmount, which address Oswald used in cashing his first two paychecks from Jaggars Chiles Stovall.

Paragraph 3 with its reference to Oswald's having paid the house rent on the 2nd could refer to the rent on the Mercedes Street apartment which was overdue on the weekend of Sept. 29 or 30th (WR 639) or the weekend of October 6 and 7, 1962. This would explain Oswald's admonition, "so don't worry about it".

Paragraph 4 eliminates April 1963 as a date for the letter, since Oswald never paid a gas bill on Neely Street according to the Commission's own files. However, Marina's statement that "water was free" on Elsbeth Street also eliminates the dates of January 1963 and November 1962 when they lived on Elsbeth Street. If true Marina's statement means that this letter could not have been written after the move from the Mercedes Street apartment in Fort Worth. The date of the letter would then be October 1962.

Paragraph 5 seems to belong to October 1962 to the exclusion of any other date; The Warren Report itself states:

"Oswald worked at the Leslie Welding Co. on Monday, October 8, but failed to appear on the following date. He was already in Dallas. He falsely told his wife that he had been discharged and told George Bouhs that the job had been a temporary one. Sometime later the company received <sup>undated</sup> a letter from him stating that he had "moved permanently to Dallas", and asking that the wages due him be forwarded to him at box 2915 in Dallas." (WR 639)

If this paragraph of the undated letter does in fact refer to Oswald's last check from Leslie Welding, it would explain the doubt Oswald expresses as to whether the money from work will come. It would also mean that the letter falsely attributed by the Commission to the Walker incident with a date of early April 1963 was actually written after Oswald paid for the box on October 9, 1962, and before he received his check from Leslie Welding. The check from Leslie Welding was ~~stated~~ paid through the bank on October 25, 1962. (22H277). This was a short check. That Oswald and not Marina cashed it may have meant that the adventure did not come off as expected.

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